

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PER-01 SSO-00 /012 W

-----131452Z 049345 /46

P 131310Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8624

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (WEST, JOHN C.), SA

SUBJECT: ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE WEST

REF: (A) STATE 131545, (B) STATE 133518

1. DURING VISIT TO RIYADH BY CODEL STONE (JUNE 6-8), CHARGE ASKED DEPUTY CHIEF OF ROYAL PROTOCOL, SHEIKH MANSOUR AL-KHURAIJI, IF SOME SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT COULD BE MADE SO THAT AMBASSADOR WEST COULD PRESENT CREDENTIALS BEFORE OUR NATIONAL DAY, JULY 4. KHURAIJI ANSWERED THAT SUCH A REQUEST WAS MOST REASONABLE, AND THAT HE WOULD TRY TO HELP. HE ALSO ASKED THAT WE GET THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOARD, SINCE THEY HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY (WHICH THEY JEALOUSLY GUARD) FOR GETTING THE CREDENTIALS BALL ROLLING.

2. REF B ARRIVED SHORTLY BEFORE CHARGE CALLED ON CHIEF OF MFA PROTOCOL, SHEIKH SALEM SONBOL, TO FOLLOW UP ON AMBASSADOR'S CREDENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS. WHEN AMBASSADOR SONBOL WAS TOLD, HOWEVER, THAT AMBASSADOR WAS PROBABLY ARRIVING ON JUNE 29 (THE LOCAL "FRIDAY") HE SAID THIS TIMING ONLY GAVE THE MINISTRY AND ROYAL PROTOCOL TWO WORKING DAYS (JULY 2 AND 3) TO HANDLE ALL OF THE PROTOCOL ARRANGEMENTS. HE SAID CREDENTIAL CEREMONIES USUALLY FOLLOW THE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL BY ANYWHERE FROM TWO TO THREE WEEKS, OR MORE. BECAUSE SONBOL WAS TRAVELLING TO RIYADH ON JUNE 12, HOWEVER, HE AGREED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH SHEIKH AHMED ABDUL WAHAB, THE CHIEF OF ROYAL PROTOCOL,

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AND SEE IF SOMETHING COULD ANYHOW BE ARRANGED.

3. WE HAD DONE SOME FAVORS FOR SONBOL, AND ASKED HIM -- FOR THE SERVICE OF OUR COMMON INTERESTS -- TO HELP US ON THIS ONE.

4. SONBOL TOLD CHARGE THIS MORNING (JUNE 13) THAT ABDUL WAHAB SAID JUNE 29 IS CUTTING IT TOO CLOSE. ABDUL WAHAB SAID THAT

THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS ARE, OF COURSE, OUT. ON SATURDAY, JULY 2, THE KING WILL BE FULLY INVOLVED IN AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA BY YEMENI PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI. THEREAFTER, THE COURT WILL BE CLOSING DOWN TO MOVE TO JIDDA WITH AN EXPECTED ETA OF JULY 6. ABDUL WAHAB SAID THAT IF THE AMBASSADOR COULD MOVE UP HIS ARRIVAL PLANS AND ARRIVE AROUND JUNE 24 OR 25, CREDENTIALS COULD BE ARRANGED THAT WEEK.

5. IF SUCH A CHANGE IN THE AMBASSADOR'S ETA COULD NOT BE MADE, SONBOL SUGGESTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR POSTPONE HIS ARRIVAL IN SAUDI ARABIA UNTIL AFTER JULY 4. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A CONSTRAINT AND AN INCONVENIENCE FOR THE AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE ACTUALLY TO BE IN COUNTRY, BUT NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THE JULY 4 CEREMONY WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE HOSTED BY THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.

6. JULY 4 RECEPTION: WITH THE AMBASSADOR'S ETA AND OFFICIAL STATUS ON THE FOURTH STILL UNDECIDED, WE HAVE FINISHED OUR REVIEW OF THE MASTER LIST FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION (RECEPTION, 7-8:30 P.M.) AND WILL BE SENDING OUT THE INVITATIONS CIRCA JUNE 20 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. THIS WAS MENTIONED TO AMBASSADOR SONBOL, WITH THE COMMENT THAT IF THE AMBASSADOR HAD BY THEN PRESENTED CREDENTIALS, HE WOULD OF COURSE ASSUME THE HOSTSHIP OF THE RECEPTION. SONBOL SAID THAT WOULD BE THE NATURAL THING TO DO. (SINCE BOTH THE DCM'S AND AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE ARE ON COMPOUND, THE VENUE WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED WHETHER RECEPTION WAS GIVEN BY MR. WILEY OR BY AMBASSADOR WEST.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977JIDDA04174
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770210-0423
Format: TEL
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770664/aaaacdwwk.tel
Line Count: 88
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2b344f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 131545, 77 STATE 133518
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2178497
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE WEST
TAGS: OVIP, SA, (WEST, JOHN C)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2b344f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009